

influence of this treatment, the redness, and even the pain, had completely disappeared; and there remained but a slight yellowness in the part, and finally, that the cerebral symptoms came on suddenly afterwards with extreme violence. M. Blandin immediately bled him, applied twelve leeches behind the ears, siphonisms to the feet, a purgative injection, and friction with tartar emetic ointment, to the part which had been the seat of the erysipelas. The fifth day the inflammation returned, and extended over the internal and superior third of the thigh. The cerebral symptoms disappeared, and the patient complained only of head-ache and lassitude. The following days the erysipelas extended, and considerable fever set in; this was combated by frictions with mercurial ointment, and in eight days the patient was completely recovered.—*Archives Générales.*

14. *On the Treatment of Habitual Constipation.* By ROBERT J. GRAVES, M. D. &c.—In many chronic diseases, and in habitual constipation, it is of the greatest consequence to procure daily and regular discharges from the bowels. *Lavements* effect this purpose most conveniently, and possess the advantage of not interfering with or weakening the digestive functions, of the stomach and upper portion of the alimentary canal. Many persons, however, particularly females, have an insuperable objection to this method of obtaining relief, and acquire the habit of taking aperient medicines whenever their bowels are confined.

Various causes have combined to render blue pill and calomel almost popular remedies, to which many have recourse when their bowels are irregular, or the stomach out of order. Indeed, it is quite incredible what a number of persons are in the habit of taking these preparations, either by themselves, or combined with other purgatives, whenever, to use the common expression, they feel themselves bilious. This habit sooner or later induces a state of extreme nervous irritability, and the invalid finally becomes a confirmed and unhappy hypochondriac; he is, in fact, slowly poisoned, without the more obvious symptoms of mercurialization being at any time produced.

It is almost unnecessary to observe, that although saline aperients give temporary relief, they afterwards increase the tendency to constipation, and weaken the stomach. The class of purgatives least liable to objection consists of magnesia, aloes, rhubarb, colocynth, &c. for exhibiting which, many well-known and excellent formulæ are used. But even these substances, whose debilitating effects on the stomach are not near so great as that of mercurials and salts, are attended with the disadvantage of being required in larger doses in proportion as the bowels become accustomed to their action. To remedy this evil, Dr. Elliotson has suggested a valuable combination, consisting of compound extract of coloeynth with minute doses of croton oil. This I have frequently given with the best effects; but it is liable to a serious objection, for unless the croton oil be perfectly mixed with the mass, some of the pills may be too powerful, while the others are comparatively inert, and consequently the patient is exposed to the danger of hypercatharsis, as I have twice witnessed, although in both cases the medicine had been prepared in the shop of a respectable apothecary. The following combination will, in general, serve to obviate costiveness, without diminishing the appetite, or being attended with the necessity of the dose being increased as the patient becomes accustomed to its use:—R. Electuarii sennæ, 3*ii.*; Pulv. supertart. potassæ, 3*ss.*; Carbonatis ferri, 3*ii.*; Syrupi zingiberis, q. s.; Ft. electuarium. For the first few days I generally add about two drachms of sulphur to this electuary; but as soon as its operation has been established, the quantity of sulphur may be diminished one-half, and at the end of a week it may be omitted altogether. The dose must be regulated by its effects, but in general a small tea-spoonful in the middle of the day and at bed-time will be sufficient.

The value of the carbonate of iron as a tonic aperient has not been duly appreciated; I have succeeded in curing, with it alone, a practitioner of emi-

nence in this city, who had been long subject to extreme constipation, and had been reduced to the necessity of taking an enormous dose of purgatives almost every week.

When injections carefully administered with Read's syringe fail to remove obstinate constipation, which they will sometimes, though rarely do, other means must be resorted to. Some practitioners are in the habit of giving one dose of active purgatives after another, adding to the strength of each dose in proportion to the obstinacy of the case. This is an imprudent and hazardous mode of proceeding. In such cases, the stomach will generally be capable of retaining castor oil; and I prefer giving repeated doses of this medicine to any other when the bowels display such an unusual degree of obstinacy, inasmuch as it may be safely accumulated in the alimentary canal, and will in the end procure evacuations without any of the dangers which attend repeated doses of acid and drastic substances. I generally commence with two ounces, to be repeated every second hour, until the desired effect is produced. I do not recollect who it was first made the important observation, that in obstinate constipation the first dose of castor oil must be large, but when this has acted on the bowels, the dose may be gradually diminished, provided that the medicine is continued every day for some time. I have verified this in private practice, and lately had a patient in the Meath hospital whose bowels had resisted injections and the strongest cathartics. Three ounces of castor oil continued for two days in succession, two ounces on the next day, and one ounce on the fourth, were found quite effectual. In some, the daily dose may be thus gradually diminished to a tea-spoonful at bed-time.

When the tendency to constipation is habitual, and the patient is not effectually relieved by the daily use of injections, and when the peculiar circumstances of the complaint render the administration of aperient medicines by the mouth inadmissible, great advantage may be derived from the application of purgative liniments to the abdomen. The one I have found most useful consists of four parts of castor oil and one part of tincture of jalap. This must be diligently rubbed into the region of the stomach every morning before the patient rises, and it must be done under the bed-clothes, least the unpleasant odour should sicken the stomach. I am indebted to a medical friend for this suggestion, which I used with success in the case of a young gentleman, whose state had become almost hopeless.

In constipated habits, I have likewise occasionally derived very remarkable benefit from the use of nitric acid given in sufficient doses. It seems, like the carbonate of iron, to possess the advantage of combining tonic with aperient qualities.

In connexion with this subject, I may remark, that long-continued and repeated attacks of constipation, by enlarging the cæcum and colon, lay the foundation of other diseases. This happens most frequently in females, but is not uncommon among males. In such cases the enlargement of the guts may occasion either of two distinct forms of disease, both attributable to the retention and accumulation of hardened faeces. In one form the symptoms are calculated to mislead the medical attendant, by inducing him to believe that his patient is labouring under chronic hepatitis. Pain and tenderness, and in some, hardness, or even a degree of enlargement, are perceptible in the right hypochondrium, while the patient's aspect is bilious, and he not unfrequently complains of pains in the right shoulder. At times he is subject to violent fits of colic, or to what he compares to cramp in the stomach, particularly after the bowels have been confined, after eating vegetables calculated to degenerate flatulence, or after exposure to cold.

In the other form, the general health suffers less; the pain and other local symptoms referred to the right hypochondrium are not complained of, but the patient is occasionally subject, particularly on exposure to the action of the causes before enumerated, to violent attacks of vomiting and pain in the belly, which are accompanied by the characteristic symptoms of intestinal obstruc-

tion. The circumstance that the immediate attack was apparently induced by some palpable and known cause, such as an error in diet, or exposure to cold, may here deceive the practitioner, and cause him to overlook the fecal accumulation, without whose removal recovery cannot take place. I and two other practitioners were several times deceived in the case of a gentleman, of a robust constitution and great strength of body; and the true cause of the sudden and dangerous colics to which he was subject, was not discovered until he happened to mention, that when a young man, he seldom went to stool more than once a week. This led to the suspicion of an enlarged colon, and ever since the attacks have readily yielded to large injections administered by means of a Read's syringe, without which instrument he now never ventures to travel. The practical point that strictly claims our attention is, that the period of life at which the patient becomes subject to these attacks, is often long subsequent to the cessation or diminution of the habit of constipation, and consequently the physician will not perceive the true cause of the complaint unless he questions the patient very accurately.—*Dublin Journal of Medical and Chemical Science.*

15. *On the Exhibition of Opium in Large Doses in certain Diseases.*—The second No. of the *Dublin Journal of Medical and Chemical Science*, contains some interesting remarks by Dr. STOKES on this subject. From the facts he has recorded, he deems the following conclusions justifiable.

1st. That in certain cases of inflammation of serous and mucous membranes, where depletion by blood-letting, or other antiphlogistic measures, are inadmissible, and the system in a state of collapse, the exhibition of opium has a powerful effect in controlling the disease.

2d. That under these circumstances the remedy may be given in very large doses, with great benefit and safety.

3d. That its effect then is to raise the powers of life, and remove the local disease.

4th. That the poisonous effects of opium are rarely observed in these cases; the collapse and debility of the patient appearing to cause a tolerance of the remedy.

5th. The cases in which the utility of this practice has been ascertained are as follows:

Simple peritonitis, in a stage where bleeding cannot be performed. Low puerperal peritonitis. Peritonitis from perforation of the intestine; from the opening of an abscess into the sac; or lastly, after the operation of paracentesis in debilitated subjects. Violent diarrhoea, supervening in exhausted subjects. Phagedenic ulceration of the throat, in similar individuals. And cases of chronic gastritis, and gastro-duodenitis in patients exhausted by the long continuance of the disease.

6th. The cases in which this mode of treatment would be probably useful are, peritonitis from rupture of the bladder, or uterus, traumatic rupture of the intestine, or after the operation for strangulated hernia.

The last observation which I shall make here is, that in most of these cases, particularly in those of diseases of serous membranes, wine was given in conjunction with the opium, and in all the patients were supported by a lightly nutritious diet.

16. *Dropsy cured by Muriate of Gold.*—Dr. WENDT relates in *Rust's Magazin*, B. XXV. eight cases of dropsy, of which seven were cured by the muriate of gold; the eighth case was complicated with consumption. This remedy has been employed for several years in the hospital at Breslau, and with success. Most of the cases were the sequelæ of intermittent fever.

17. *On the Cure of Amenorrhœa by Leeches applied to the Mammas.* By CHARLES LOUDON, M. D. of Leamington Spa.—There are but few of the sympathies which